Split the Lark New Music Ensemble

Brianna Tagliaferro and Kay Madison, Directors

Friday, October 16, 2015 | 7:30 p.m.
Shindell Choral Hall
Robert E. Mortensen Hall
Mason Gross Performing Arts Center
Douglass Campus

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Program

Mother Nature

Marissa Hickman (b. 1996)

Brittany Stetson, BM ’17, Soprano
Britney Alcine, BM ’16, Rebekah Daly, BM ’18, and Linda Garcia, BM ’18, Alto
Lucas Marin, BS ’18, Tenor
Andrew Moore, BM ’17, Bass

Mother Nature

Michael D’Andrea (b. 1997)

Ernest Roberts, BM ’16, Flute
Fabian Schulz, BM ’17, Oboe
Zach Sidqi, BM ’17, and John Antisz, BM ’17, Clarinet
Jessie Seoeun Jung, BM ’18, Piano
Emily Gaab, BM ’18, Violin
Jacob Shur, BM ’17, Viola
Brianna Tagliaferro, BM ’17, Cello
Nature, the Gentlest Mother

Victoria Romano
(b. 1996)

Shabnam Abedi, BM ’17, Soprano
Melissa Lisbao, BM ’18, Violin
Jacob Shur, BM ’17, Viola
Brianna Tagliaferro, BM ’17, Cello

Returning All Jumbled

Steven Moreno
(b. 1993)

Patti Anselmo, BM ’17, Flute
Eric Lampmann, BM ’16, Saxophone
John Antisz, BM ’17, Clarinet
Emmanuel Solano-Ramirez, BM ’18, Percussion
Kay Madison, BM ’17, Piano
Brianna Tagliaferro, BM ’17, Cello

Returning

Christopher Kaminski
(b. 1994)

Sabrina Van Vliet, BM ’18, Soprano
Melissa Lisbao, BM ’17, Violin
Seth Van Embden, BM ’16, Viola
Kay Madison, BM ’17, Piano

A Word

Split the Lark New Music Ensemble

The Ensemble
Program Notes

Each of the six works on tonight’s program is based on a poem by Emily Dickinson (1830–1886). The texts of those poems are provided after these program notes.

Composed by Marissa Hickman, *Mother Nature* uses harplike arpeggiations, swelling harmonies, and accompanying strings to evoke the simple, effortless beauty of nature. The work is a tone poem inspired by Emily Dickinson’s poem “Nature, the Gentlest Mother.” The music progresses through each stanza, mimicking the sounds of the walking calmness of the forest in which the poem is set. The intent of the poem, as interpreted by Hickman, is to demonstrate the delicate complexity of nature. She hopes to express exactly that through the piece—the delicate complexity of our world and of music. Hickman’s music is often melancholy, dark, and introspective. A second-year composition student at the Mason Gross School of the Arts, she began writing music at age 10 and plans to compose movie soundtracks one day.

Michael D’Andrea, composer of a second work on the program titled *Mother Nature*, began playing trumpet at age 10. He was writing music at age 15, becoming “serious about it” by the time he turned 16. D’Andrea’s first work to be performed, a setting of the Kyrie from the Latin Mass, was presented by the Piscataway High School Chamber Choir and conducted by D’Andrea himself in January 2015. He is a first-year undergraduate at Mason Gross, studying composition with Charles Fussell.
It is ironic that Emily Dickinson would write a poem about nature considering that, as a recluse, she seldom interacted with it. However, anyone who knows about the poet’s deep, pervasive obsession with death will understand why she was compelled to exalt the gentle Mother Nature who wills silence. Victoria Romano, who composed the work Nature, the Gentlest Mother, says, “Much of Dickinson’s original rhetoric remains in this adaption of ‘Nature, the Gentlest Mother,’ but perhaps my commentary will emerge as the tune meanders ‘in forest and the hill.’” Romano is a sophomore at Mason Gross and an aspiring composer.

The text used in Steven Moreno’s piece, Returning All Jumbled, is taken from Dickinson’s poem “Returning.” All the instruments in the composer’s work—minus the voice—act as one, creating an interesting timbre. The voice is free to sing in any rhythm it pleases. The piece is six movements long. If the voice doesn’t finish the text before the movement ends, it is alone. Moreno notes, “This separates the voice from all the other instruments and makes it odd. The other instruments don’t really like the voice very much. They hiss at the voice.” Moreno is a sophomore at Mason Gross studying composition with Christopher Doll.

Based on Dickinson’s poem by the same name, Christopher Kaminski’s Returning features a knock echoing through the singer’s mind throughout the piece. This represents an inner debate about whether the singer should go through the door to her old home. The inner monologue about whether to return to a life that has been left is the
inspiration for this work. Kaminski is a senior undergraduate composer and clarinetist at Mason Gross. He is studying composition with Tarik O’Regan and clarinet with Maureen Hurd Hause.

About Split the Lark New Music Ensemble

Formed by Brianna Tagliaferro and Kay Madison in spring 2015, Split the Lark New Music Ensemble (STL) is an undergraduate group at the Mason Gross School of the Arts. The ensemble strives to bring contemporary classical music to life by studying and performing works composed by Rutgers students. STL encourages a collaborative rehearsal process among its members. The group hopes to offer music performances and workshops to not only the Rutgers community but communities and schools throughout New Jersey next semester. Tagliaferro and Madison extend a special thank-you to all the members of the ensemble and to the composers who have submitted music for the group to study and perform.
Poems (Emily Dickinson)

Nature, the Gentlest Mother
Nature, the gentlest mother,
Impatient of no child,
The feeblest or the waywardest,
Her admonition mild

In forest and the hill
By traveller is heard,
Restraining rampant squirrel
Or too impetuous bird.

How fair her conversation,
A summer afternoon,—
Her household, her assembly;
And when the sun goes down

Her voice among the aisles
Incites the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket,
The most unworthy flower.

When all the children sleep,
She turns as long away
As will suffice to light her lamps;
Then, bending from the sky

With infinite affection
An infiniter care,
Her golden finger on her lip,
Wills silence everywhere.
Returning
I years had been from home,
And now, before the door,
I dared not open, lest a face
I never saw before

Stare vacant into mine
And ask my business there.
My business,—just a life I left,
Was such still dwelling there?

I fumbled at my nerve,
I scanned the windows near;
The silence like an ocean rolled,
And broke against my ear.

I laughed a wooden laugh
That I could fear a door,
Who danger and the dead had faced,
But never quaked before.

I fitted to the latch
My hand, with trembling care,
Lest back the awful door should spring,
And leave me standing there.

I moved my fingers off
As cautiously as glass,
And held my ears, and like a thief
Fled gasping from the house.

A Word
A word is dead
When it is said,
Some say.
I say it just
Begins to live
That day
**Split the Lark New Music Ensemble**

**Instrumentalists**

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<td><strong>Percussion</strong></td>
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**Vocalists**

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About the Music Department

The Music Department at the Mason Gross School has a faculty of 33 full-time and approximately 78 part-time members. There are approximately 469 students enrolled in its seven degree programs: bachelor of music, bachelor of arts, master of music, master of arts, artist diploma, doctor of philosophy, and doctor of musical arts. The mission of all music degree programs is to develop well-educated professional musicians who have a deep historical and theoretical understanding of all aspects of music. The program provides students traditional, well-grounded conservatory training while preparing them for the changing world of the arts in the 21st century.
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